

Message Text

SECRET

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TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 204807

EXDIS FOR AMB PARKER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MILI, XF, IS, LE

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: (A) BEIRUT 4676, (B) BEIRUT 4678, (C) TEL AVIV 10332,
(D) TEL AVIV 10339; (E) JERUSALEM 2244

1. ON THE BASIS OF THE LATEST EXCHANGES BETWEEN AMBASSADOR

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LEWIS AND THE ISRAELIS, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE GONE ABOUT AS
FAR AS WE CAN GO WITH THEM FOR THE MOMENT. THE ISRAELI
POSITION AS REGARDING THE ALTERNATE CENTRAL ROUTE HAS NOW
REPEAT NOW BEEN DEFINED WITH ADEQUATE PRECISION. WE RECOG-
NIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THE LEBANESE WILL BE RELUCTANT TO TAKE
NEW DECISIONS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME NOTE THAT THEY HAVE NOT
YET GIVEN UP SUCH OPTIONS AS MOVING THE FORCES THROUGH

NABATIYYAH, THE EVIDENCE BEING THEIR REQUEST TO THE SYRIANS A FEW DAYS AGO. WE ARE FAIRLY SURE THAT THE SYRIANS WANT TO GET LEBANESE INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON AND MIGHT BE PREPARED TO FALL BACK TO THE NABATIYYAH OR CENTRAL ROUTE IF THEY WERE CONVINCED THERE IS NO PRESENT LIKELIHOOD THAT THE LEBANESE UNIT COULD MOVE BEYOND ITS PRESENT POSITION DIRECTLY TO THE TIBNIN AREA.

2. DRAWING ON THIS FRAMEWORK, WE ASSUME ON YOUR MONDAY MEETING WITH BOUTROS YOU WILL EXPLORE FULLY THE POSSIBILITY OF USING A CENTRAL ROUTE INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON AS A FALL BACK. YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT WE ARE IN FAVOR OF ANY WORKABLE SOLUTION AND IDEALLY ONE THAT MINIMIZES THE RISK TO THE LEBANESE. IF SOME OF THE TROOPS COULD BE LIFTED BY EITHER UN OR LAF HELICOPTERS FROM THEIR PRESENT POSITION, IT WOULD BE FINE. IF SOME OR ALL TROOPS AND THEIR EQUIPMENT ARE BROUGHT BY ROAD NORTH AND THEN SOUTH THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL ROUTE, THIS WOULD BE FINE. THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL THAT THE LAF UNIT GET INTO SOUTH LEBANON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. ALSO URGE BOUTROS TO DELAY COURT OF INQUIRY OR COURT MARTIAL ACTIONS ON HADDAD.

4. FYI: WE RECOGNIZE THAT GOING BACK TO THE LEBANESE IN
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PROPOSING A NEW WAY OF BRINGING THE LEBANESE ARMY INTO THE SOUTH DOES NOT DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF U.S. CREDIBILITY. WE ARE NOT FORECLOSING POSSIBILITY OF GOING BACK TO THE ISRAELIS WITH NEW DEMANDS THAT THEY SOMEHOW ASSURE THE COOPERATION OF THE MILITIAS AT ALL COSTS, BUT WE BELIEVE YOU MUST MAKE A MAXIMUM TRY ON THIS REVISED PROPOSAL FIRST. WE MAY ALSO WANT TO APPROACH THE SYRIANS INDEPENDENTLY ABOUT GUARANTEEING THE SAFETY OF THE ROUTE, DEPENDING ON THE RESULTS OF YOUR APPROACH TO BOUTROS. IT WAS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT WHEN WEIZMAN AND COMPANY GAVE ASSURANCE THE SYRIANS COULD GO BELOW THE "RED LINE" TO BRING THE LAF UNIT TO THE LITANI, AND THIS COULD HAVE SOME ADDED ADVANTAGES LATER WHEN LOGISTIC ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE. END FYI. CHRISTOPHER

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